

# The Library Assistant:

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## EDITORIALS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS.

**The Next Meeting** of the Association will be held at the National Library for the Blind, Great Smith Street, Westminster, on November 23rd, at 6.30 p.m. On this occasion, it will be remembered, the A.A.L. is holding a joint meeting with the London and Home Counties Branch of the Library Association. Assistants will thus have an excellent opportunity of hearing four well-known librarians—Miss M. Frost (Worthing), Messrs. Bolton (Watford), Sayers (Croydon), and Stewart (Bermondsey), on "The Proposals of the Departmental Report regarding Urban Libraries." Lt.-Col. Luxmoore Newcombe, the Librarian of the Central Library for Students, will take the Chair. Those present are invited to take part in the discussion. We make a special appeal to all those with ideas to attend this meeting—it is an excellent opportunity for showing to the parent Association what the younger generation of assistants can do. The opportunity is too good to be neglected, and every London Assistant who is worthy of a chiefship should do his (or her) best to come. The first half-hour will be devoted to informal discussions and to the Junior Meeting. The Library will be open to inspection from 4.30 p.m. onwards, and all who wish to see something of the activities in working hours are cordially invited to attend. The Library has recently been rebuilt and re-organized, and this opportunity of a visit will no doubt be keenly appreciated by our members. Please note particularly that the Great Smith Street entrance should be used, and not the one in Tufton Street, by both afternoon and evening visitors.

**The December Meeting** will be held at Tottenham on December 14th, when Mr. K. G. Hunt, B.A., F.L.A., Superintendent of Branches, Tottenham, will read a paper on "The Development of the Printed Alphabet." Full particulars will appear in the next issue.

**The Jubilee Conference** at Edinburgh received an excellent press, especially in the more important provincial dailies. The outstanding points from the journalistic point of view were Mr. Jast's remarks on the employment of graduates in libraries, Lord Elgin's speech, the King's greetings, and Colonel Newcombe's paper on the Central Library for Students. Everybody appears to have enjoyed themselves, and the Conference is thought to be the most successful ever held by the Library Association. A full report from the pen of Mr. L. Chubb appears elsewhere in this issue.

**New Library Buildings** have been opened at York and Chesterfield, and the Library Committee of Johannesburg has recommended the erection of a new building at the estimated cost of £270,000. New buildings usually mean new or more assistants. More and more is it becoming impossible to obtain positions of any value without qualifications. The adoption of the Report will mean increased activity everywhere and we sincerely hope that all junior members will hasten to take up examination work. Their success means credit to the A. A. L. as well as themselves, and after reading Mr. Percy's excellent pamphlet presented at the Conference we must all agree that we shall have to work hard to prove worthy successors of the fine men who founded our profession. It is a pity that Mr. Percy's essay was not read at the Conference, as it is certainly one of the best things ever written about the history of the Association, both in style and content. It struck just the right note, and expressed wit without incongruity, pride without complacency, and emotion without sentimentality. We advise all who have not seen it to try to persuade the Honorary Secretary of the L.A. to give them a copy.

"**Sequels**" is well on the way to completion. Please do not forget to notify Mr. W. H. Parker, Public Library, Mare Street, Hackney, E.8, of any "finds" in the way of obscure sequel stories. Please fill in the forms enclosed last month and despatch as soon as possible to the Hon. Secretary. To think about the desirability of doing something and to do nothing is psychologically harmful—see William James's "Psychology"—therefore having decided that you want "Sequels," fill in the form and order it immediately. If you put off doing it you will be applying for the book this time next year, when it will be O. P.

**The Next Meeting of the Council** will be held at the National Library for the Blind, on Wednesday, November 16th, at 7 p.m.

**L.A. Examinations.**—The Special Period for the Literary History examination in *December* is the same as for the previous examination, namely, "Wordsworth and his circle: with special study of the *Prelude*." The Special Period for *May*, 1928, is from 1880 to 1860.

### THE THIRTY-THIRD INAUGURAL MEETING.

One of the most successful inaugural meetings which the A. A. L. has ever held, took place at the Guildhall, on Wednesday, October 5th.

Over two hundred members were present, and the historic Council Chamber was filled. No better meeting place for such an important meeting could have been obtained. A cordial welcome was extended to the gathering by Mr. Deputy A. C. Stanley-Stone (Chief Commoner), and Major W. H. Champness (Chairman of the Library Committee), who jointly entertained the members to tea at the conclusion of their tour of Guildhall. For some hours before the evening meeting some officials of the Art Gallery and Museum, the Librarian of the Guildhall (Mr. Douthwaite) and his courteous staff, conducted parties over the building. A very greatly appreciated favour was granted when visitors were allowed to see and handle some of the great treasures of the library. Mr. Douthwaite very kindly spent an hour with a group of interested visitors, telling them something of the inner history of the collection. The Association is very much in Mr. Douthwaite's debt for the great personal efforts he made to ensure that our visit to his wonderful library was a success.

Interesting as the afternoon programme was, for most members, however, the evening address on "Canadian Literature," by Dr. G. H. Locke, was the most important event of the day. Very rarely has the A. A. L. been fortunate enough to have three such eminent and representative men on their platform as Sir Frederic Kenyon, Viscount Burnham, and Dr. Locke.

In his few remarks from the Chair, Sir Frederic made an apt reference to the Departmental Report. It was likely to be productive of good results, he thought, because it did not ask for too much. In any case it would raise the status of the whole profession. Much would depend in the future on the ability of Associations and individuals to sink petty jealousies and to offer greater service to the public as a united and National institution.

Dr. Locke then gave us his address on "Canadian Literature." The speaker, to quote Col. J. M. Mitchell, is "one of the most eminent of the world's municipal librarians," and many would rather have heard him on some technical aspect of our work. In some hands an address on Canadian literature would have been dull. Dr. Locke, we feel sure, is never that. In a most enviable, breezy manner, as Sir Frederic Kenyon had predicted, he took charge of the meeting from a few minutes of his climbing into "the pulpit."

The time had come, he said, for a Union of Library Associations, one Association from England, one from Canada and America, and two perhaps from Ireland which should put before the literary world the English-speaking nations' views on library affairs. What was wanted was a Union of all the elements of librarianship. We could then tell

everybody what librarians really did. When he was asked recently what he did for a living, he had replied : " I am the promoter of the public intelligence of Toronto."

Many people said there was no Canadian literature. This was not true. Many people had said that wheat could never be grown in certain parts of Canada. Now there were millions of bushels grown every year. If people said and thought there would never be a national literature in Canada, there never would be. Literature needed nurture, but it could not flourish under a standardized system of education. Standardization made for an average, and was a pernicious doctrine. We should not judge literature by averages, but by greatest efforts, just as we judge an athlete, not by his average skill, but by his records.

Tradition, continued Dr. Locke, was essential to literature. He wanted English people to judge Canadians by their highest attainments. After a rapid glance at the most representative Canadian writers, " Sam Slick," C. G. D. Roberts, Bliss Carmen, Sir Gilbert Parker, etc., Dr. Locke read to the meeting some beautiful poems by Bliss Carmen and others, on the birch canoe—that characteristic product of Canada.

Viscount Burnham, by special request then addressed the meeting. He heartily supported the suggestion for a Union of Library Associations. When this was done, he pointed out, Englishmen must remember that Canada would have to be treated, not as a subordinate country, but on terms of equality with the mother country. Canadian librarians were, like English librarians, doing fine work in bringing books into the otherwise lonely lives of people living away from towns.\*

The President of the A. A. L., Mr. G. F. Vale, then thanked Dr. Locke for his enjoyable address, and made a happy reference to Dr. Locke's temperament which seemed, he said, to make people enjoy his company from the first five minutes of acquaintance. This vote of thanks was seconded by Mr. A. Webb, of the Brighton Libraries. Mr. G. P. Jones, seconded by Miss E. Gerard, then thanked the Chairman and Viscount Burnham for their attendance. A " portman-teau " vote of thanks to the Librarian, the Staff and Officials, and to the City Lands and Library Committees was presented to the meeting by Mr. R. D. Hilton Smith, and we should like to add here our personal appreciation of the debt the Association owes to Mr. A. C. Stanley-Stone and Major W. H. Champness. Without their generous help the meeting would have been impossible to arrange.

We have described this meeting at some length because unfortunately Dr. Locke spoke from notes only, and we therefore cannot print his address in full. Furthermore, we feel sure that all members will be interested in this memorable inaugural meeting. May we

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\*By the courtesy of Viscount Burnham we have been favoured with a verbatim report of his remarks, which we shall print in full in the December number.

congratulate the Education Committee and its indefatigable Secretary on the success of their efforts. It is interesting to note that more than a dozen members travelled from the South Coast Division to the meeting, many came from the Eastern Division, and that many Chief Librarians, including Miss Eastman (Cleveland), Messrs. Berwick Sayers, W. J. Harris, A. G. Burt, G. R. Bolton, G. E. L. Denne, A. Cawthorne, J. H. Quinn, and Adam Strohm, of Detroit (Michigan), were present.

F. S. S.

### THE LIBRARY ASSOCIATION JUBILEE CONFERENCE.

The Fiftieth Anniversary Conference of the Library Association was held at Edinburgh from September 26th to October 1st. The Conference was worthy of the occasion and may well mark the beginning of a new era in librarianship—internationally, nationally and locally.

Optimism was prevalent everywhere — not optimism based on foolish premises — but optimism engendered in a record of fifty years of steady, sustained progress, strengthened by an extended vision of a national service as envisaged in the Report of the Departmental Committee on public libraries, and given added keenness by the encouragement of representatives from nineteen foreign countries.

It was not possible for any single member to attend all the meetings, as on some days sessions ran simultaneously. From Monday until Thursday there were the morning, afternoon and evening sessions, while on Friday was a full day's tour to the Scott Country with the Annual Meeting of the Association in the evening. On Saturday the overseas delegates and some members of the Library Association visited Dunfermline at the invitation of the Dunfermline Town Council and the Carnegie Dunfermline Trustees.

The first papers were presented on Monday afternoon at a municipal and county libraries joint session held under the chairmanship of Mr. Gorrie, convener of the Library Committee, Carnegie United Kingdom Trust. The meeting was disappointing. It failed to sustain interest and did not give promise of the rousing meetings which were to follow during the week.

During the afternoon the Chairman of the Local Reception Committee, Sir George Macdonald and Lady Macdonald held an "At Home" to the overseas visitors.

In the evening the Lord Provost, the Magistrates and Council extended a Civic welcome to the Conference at a Reception in the beautiful Usher Hall. Lord Elgin and Mr. Carl Roden, President of the American Library Association responded. Mr. Roden was heard twice during the Conference and on each occasion he made appreciative references to the work of English librarians. His orations were marked

by beautiful phraseology, suggesting Mr. Roden to be a librarian with ideals, a deep-thinker and a philosopher.

The first General Session was on Tuesday morning, and opened with the induction as President, of the Earl of Elgin and Kincardine, C.M.G. The retiring President, Dr. Guppy, a gentleman of great charm, in handing over his office to the Earl of Elgin referred to the support and stimulus given to the library movement by the late Mr. Andrew Carnegie, which had been continued by the trustees of the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust of whom Lord Elgin was the present Chairman.

Lord Elgin, anticipating his first duty, had transmitted to His Majesty, at Balmoral Castle, as from the Conference, a message of loyal duty. A reply being to hand, Lord Elgin's first act in Conference was to convey a message from the King, all members and delegates standing while the Royal message was read. The message was :

THE EARL OF ELGIN,

*President* : Library Association Conference.

I am commanded to express the sincere thanks of the King to the representatives and delegates of the Library Association assembled in Conference at Edinburgh, for their message of loyal greeting.

His Majesty congratulates the Association upon the celebration of its jubilee, and wishes all success to its important and national work in providing means for self-education and promoting the love of reading among all sections of the community.

(Signed) STAMFORDHAM.

Lord Elgin then proceeded to read further messages of congratulation from, among others, the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Earl of Balfour, as Chancellor of the University of Cambridge, Viscount Cave, Chancellor of the University of Oxford, and Lord Eustace Percy, President of the Board of Education. Greetings and congratulations were received from the American Library Association, the Ontario Library Commission, the Library Associations of Norway, Poland, Sweden and Denmark, the Royal Library of Belgium, the Chamber of Commerce of the State of New York, and many English bodies, including our own Association. Other greetings arrived during the week, a cordial greeting from Japan arriving late on Thursday, and was presented at the Conference dinner.

Overseas representatives and visitors were next welcomed, the President receiving representative delegates from Australia, Belgium, Canada, China, Czecho-Slovakia, Denmark, France, Germany, Holland, India, Italy, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, the United States, and the League of Nations. The Japanese representatives arrived later in the week. Each delegate, as presented, was given a cordial welcome by the Conference. The proceedings were organized excellently and the duties of the President were carried out with dignity and distinction, the admiration of every member and every visitor.

From this point the Conference settled to the consideration of papers.

Meeting, as we were, in Scotland's historic capital, a City world-famed for its associations with writers and scholars who have made large contributions to the literature and knowledge of the world, it was perhaps fitting that the first paper should deal with the recently instituted National Library of Scotland. It was a little unfortunate that Dr. Dickson's voice did not carry to the back of the hall, and, after the rousing nature of the opening proceedings, it was a trifle difficult to settle to matters of historic fact. The paper admirably recorded the wonderful development of a private library to a national institution. The Advocates Library has long been recognised as one of the great libraries of this country, and librarians rejoice at the successful conclusion of protracted negotiations which give a larger field of usefulness to a great library.

Mr. Percy's paper "The Library Association: a record of fifty years" was printed, circulated, and taken as read. This excellent paper leaves a desire for more, and one can but wish that Mr. Percy may yet write a full history of the fifty years and that the Library Association may publish the volume in commemoration of its jubilee.

Dr. Locke, Librarian, Toronto, next gave an address on "The Profession of Librarianship." Lieut.-Col. Mitchell writing in a contemporary journal of his impressions of the American Library Association Conference at Toronto, describes Dr. Locke as "one of the most eminent of the world's municipal librarians." This estimate would readily be endorsed by all who heard Dr. Locke. Dr. Locke is a librarian by choice, who believes heart and soul in his profession. He visualizes its possibilities, desiring to see libraries developed to function fully and freely with the object of helping people to become happier and more useful to themselves and to others.

The biggest disappointment of the Conference was to follow. Everyone was eager to give a rousing welcome to Dr. Melvil Dewey, who was on the programme to give an address on "Looking forward: an effort to prophesy the growth and changes of the modern library movement in its second half-century." The President read from a letter from Dr. Dewey regretting that illness had prevented him leaving America. While most people present were dumb with disappointment Mr. Jast admirably met the situation by proposing a message of sympathy, framed with well chosen words, expressing regret at Dr. Dewey's enforced absence, and appreciation of his great services to library science.

The afternoon session opened with a really excellent paper on "The Teaching of book-reading," by Mr. Marston, Secretary of the National Book Council. Unfortunately for Mr. Marston some members did not agree with the activities of the National Book Council, and his reception as their representative was rather stormy. However,



his paper was of considerable merit, a thoughtful and worthy contribution to the Conference.

Dr. Keogh, one time of Newcastle-on-Tyne, followed with an account of the consideration given to the planning of the Sterling Memorial Library now being erected at Yale University. Dr. Keogh made English librarians feel envious for the opportunity of planning a library for which £2,000,000 has been set aside.

In the evening the Earl of Elgin delivered his presidential address which was broadcast to most stations. It is worthy of note that this was the first occasion on which a Conference address has been broadcast. Taking for a title "A Jubilee : a centre and a free swing," the President focussed attention on desired developments in professional matters rather than past achievements. The urge to greater service was in keeping with the whole tone of the Conference. The free swing symbolised the development of a national library system, implying freedom for individual development, harmonised by rhythmic motion. The centre as suggested by the Departmental Committee Report, should be developed round the present Central Library for Students, and organised, possibly, as an adjunct to the British Museum. In dealing with the Jubilee of the Library Association, a plea was made for one united professional body, including within its membership all librarians, whether assistant librarians, "special" librarians, or university librarians. The appeal will be considered by the Council of our Association, and it is hoped some happy solution may be found. All assistant librarians would welcome an increase in the strength and vigour of the Library Association, and our members will be prepared to contribute their share, provided we are allowed to contribute something more than cash. We would not consent to have our existence "snuffed out," and to become nothing but a weighty appendage to a boosted membership.

The Secretary of the American Library Association, Mr. Milam, followed to give an illustrated lantern lecture on "Some features of American Library Service." Mr. Milam had unnecessary doubts as to the success of his duet. The lecture was most instructive and interesting.

The Report of the Departmental Committee was introduced for discussion on Wednesday morning by the Chairman of the Committee, Sir Frederic Kenyon. The Committee recommended the creation of a national system of library service to be brought about by voluntary co-operation of autonomous units and an institution connected with the British Museum, acting as a centre of the whole organisation. The President ruled that the discussion should, at first, be limited to the principle of co-operation for the creation of a national library service on the lines submitted by Sir Frederic Kenyon, questions of detail being taken later. The debate was most disappointing. On the following day, when "The Future of the Central Library for Students" was



under consideration, there was much enthusiasm and an obvious readiness to co-operate with the central institution. Judging from the discussion, there is little or no desire for effective co-operation among librarians along the lines laid down in the Report. This is not believed to represent the true feeling of the profession. Undoubtedly an opportunity for helpful discussion was missed and the Conference only too gladly rushed to questions of detail, co-operative cataloguing receiving the lion's share. One member, even a member of the Library Association Council, made his way to the rostrum, while the discussion was limited to the governing principle of the Report, to ask Sir Frederic Kenyon, if, in the event of the British Museum establishing a central cataloguing agency, they could arrange to print entries on slips in addition to cards. The President and Sir Frederic endeavoured to lift the discussion from trivialities to principles but without success. It seems a pity that Mr. Pacy's reservation was not permitted to be discussed as it cuts right across the principle of co-operation spontaneously emanating from the spirit of parochialism which exists among local authorities at present, and to a less degree among librarians. An appeal was made for a new spirit, and it is necessary. A continuance of the old spirit and, it may even be, the present spirit, will effectually wreck the proposals of the Departmental Committee.

On Thursday morning four papers were arranged for one session, and this proved too much. Mr. Ferguson, State Librarian of California was unfortunate in being placed last, and his paper did not receive the attention or have the audience it deserved. California has a State library service with a co-ordinating centre at Sacramento.

The paper on "Broadcasting and public libraries," was a frank plea for collaboration between librarians and the British Broadcasting Corporation. The desire of the B. B. C. is to encourage listeners to look to public libraries as the correct source for obtaining further information on subjects dealt with in broadcast talks.

"The Place of the High School library in a national library service," by Miss Ingles was of great interest. Every High School has its library but Cheltenham Ladies' College is almost the only school in this country which has a trained librarian working in harmony with professional colleagues in other branches of library work. Mlle. Huchet made a very spirited contribution to the discussion of this paper.

Miss Eastman, Librarian of the Cleveland Public Library, Ohio, read a paper dealing with the work of that library. It is difficult to appreciate any library system from a Conference paper as the numerous activities detailed tend to confuse.

The afternoon session was devoted to the discussion on "The Future of the Central Library for Students," followed by a paper entitled "The Small Library made effective," by Miss Pierce.

Apart from the meetings already mentioned the County Libraries

Section held two separate sessions and a Luncheon. The meetings secured good press reports and the Luncheon was highly successful and received the support of the President and many of the overseas visitors.

An International co-operation section held meetings during the week and agreed, subject to ratification by the various national associations to establish an International Library and Bibliographical Committee. The Committee will consist of members selected by the National Library Associations which ratify this action.

Conversations also took place as to the possibility of forming a British Empire Federation of Librarians.

Two functions of a social character were held on Wednesday. During the afternoon a reception was held by the University of Edinburgh, members being received by the Principal and Vice-Chancellor, Sir J. Alfred Ewing, K.C.B., F.R.S. In the evening the Library Association held a reception to overseas visitors in the Parliament House, with access to the National Library of Scotland, the Library of the Faculty of Advocates, the Signet Library, and the Library of the Solicitors in the Supreme Courts. Members and guests were received by the President, who was accompanied by his sister, Lady Veronica Bruce. It was a joy to be able to wander at will through the magnificent buildings and libraries so closely associated with the history of the land north of the Tweed. Parliament House, with its beautiful ceiling, fine statuary and paintings made a picturesque setting for the gathering. The programme of instrumental music was interspersed with the playing of pipers who marched up and down the long hall to the tune of their pipes, greatly to the delight of our overseas visitors. A dance was held after the reception, and this proved such a happy innovation that another was held after the Annual Dinner on the following evening.

An item of importance to all assistants from the proceedings of the Annual Meeting was the request to the Council to consider the question of adding the subject of palæography and archive science to the list of examinations. The feeling of the meeting was strongly in favour of the inclusion of this subject in the examination syllabus.

Most of the papers and messages given to the Conference will be published in the "Library Association Record," or in a separate volume of proceedings. Assistants are urged to make themselves acquainted with the transactions of the meeting, particularly noting the continuously expressed desire for a wider outlook so that librarians themselves may not hinder the path of progress. The progress to be recorded during the next fifty years will be achieved by librarians of vision. The Conference was conceived on a high level, conducted in a major key, and should serve as a renewal of faith to all who were fortunate enough to have been able to attend. This account will only serve its purpose if it conveys some little of the inspiration gathered from the

Conference. Great credit is due to Mr. Savage and his colleagues in London and Edinburgh for the organisation of the finest conference of librarians ever held in the British Isles.

The presence of our own President and a representative from five of the Divisions of our Association was made possible by the generosity of the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust. The Trust paid the expenses of these delegates and the Association is indebted to the Trustees for this encouragement to assistant librarians to take a more active interest in professional matters than has been possible in the past.

LEONARD CHUBB.

### THE "ASLIB" CONFERENCE, 1927.

Thanks to the excellent and efficient manner in which Mr. Guy Keeling carried out his arduous duties of organisation, the "Aslib" Conference at Trinity College, Cambridge, was a most pleasurable affair from start to finish. Not the least of the pleasures was, of course, the privilege of being allowed to become intimate with a place like Trinity College, but really the Conference was "strictly business" all the time, save for a free afternoon here and there which we were allowed to have in order to absorb a little of the unique beauty of the "Backs," and other places.

The dominant note of "Aslib" is specialized information, where to find it and how. The majority of the 200 delegates were business people, but there were many representatives from special libraries and information bureaux.

The visitors were received in the Common Room by the Master of Trinity, Sir J. J. Thomson, O.M. After dinner in the Great Hall, the President of "Aslib" gave his address. He made passing reference to that unique work "The Aslib Directory" which is now printing. In this book compiled by Mr. G. F. Barwick, late keeper of Printed Books at the British Museum, will be found indexed all special collections and sources of specialized information. No Reference Library will be complete without a copy.

Papers were given by Mr. A. E. Twentyman and Lt.-Col Newcombe on the Report, with special reference to the C. L. S. Undoubtedly the keystone of the library movement of the future in the United Kingdom will be the Central Library, and the generally expressed opinion at Cambridge was that in Col. Newcombe the C. L. S. had a Chief Librarian, who had not only, to quote Mr. Twentyman, "envisaged the potentialities of the library as clearly as any man could," but who would develop those potentialities to their utmost, and given the essential support, would make the Central Library an instrument of culture at the disposal of students—the salt of the land—all over the country.

Space forbids detailed mention of the numerous papers and informal discussions which took place, but reference must be made to Mr. Headicar's on "Co-Operation," Sir H. G. Lyons' on the Science Library, Mr. A. R. Wright's on "Patent Classification," Mr. A. F. Ridley's on "Information Bureaux and liason with national and local libraries," and Sir Richard Gregory's on "Standards of Book Selection in Science and Technology." Mr. Headicar's paper was well received, for with characteristic energy and a most contagious desire to "get things done," he succeeded in drawing forth a very vigorous discussion. Sir Horace Plunkett paid him a fine tribute in one of the neatest speeches of the Conference. This wonderful old man, in a quiet and most unassuming voice, made special reference to the Agricultural Co-operative Library. In a five-minute speech he had given definite information, made five witty remarks, eulogised Mr. Headicar and conveyed a most charming and rare personality to an audience of over 200—a performance which most must envy. "It is men with a mission and no wit who are the trial";\* most of us have a mission nowadays, but how few the wit.

Almost as much value is drawn from the contact with other people which Conferences make so easy as from the papers listened to. I met dozens of most interesting and interested men and women who all had something fresh to say on library matters. The Conference was extremely enjoyable and very profitable. My own paper on "The Reference Libraries of London: is a Union Catalogue a Practicable Proposition?" was well received, and Mr. Headicar proposed a motion (which was eventually referred to the "Aslib" Council) that the Library Association be approached by "Aslib" with a view to taking immediate steps to form a Union Catalogue.

Public libraries were represented by Mr. H. Sharp (Croydon), Dr. Lowe (Leicester), Mr. Fenton (Cambridge), Cr. Martin (Croydon), Mr. McAdam (Warrington), and others.

F. SEYMOUR SMITH,

*Hon. Editor, and Delegate for the Association.*

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#### APPOINTMENTS.

†MEACHAEN, Patrick A., B.A., Assistant in Bethnal Green Public Library, to be Assistant Master in a Secondary School, under the Egyptian Government. Salary, L.E.450 (£461) sterling, rising after two years' service, by L.E.45 per annum.

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\*See article on Plunkett in the *Countryman*, No. 3.

† Member, A.A.L.

**BOOK-SELLING. YESTERDAY—TO-DAY—TO-MORROW.\***

By K. ROSS DAVIS.

My subject concerns one branch of an industry whose national and international importance is altogether out of proportion to its size and to the profits it is possible to make out of it.

We are living in a time when one after another of our industries is receiving a good deal of public attention, and the question arises, "Is all well with the book trade"? While it plays a less important part in our economic system than steel, coal, or textiles, nevertheless, in the long run the book trade affects our national life as profoundly as any of these.

After attempting to give you a rough sketch of the history of book-selling, and drawing attention to some details of the present day antiquarian book trade, which is my special branch of it, I should like to raise one or two points which have a bearing on larger and more general issues which concern us all.

We find a first record of an organised book trade in Athens, where it reached its most considerable dimensions during the reign of Alexander the Great in the 4th century B.C. Following the conquest of Greece by the Romans, the centre of the book trade shifted to Alexandria, where there followed a great development in organisation, by means of which the best editions of Greek, Roman, Egyptian, and Indian literature were published, based on the texts of the famous Alexandrian Library. It was not until the close of the 2nd century A.D. that the centre of the trade passed finally to Rome, where we have more complete records and can find much to remind ourselves of the Book World of the present day. In the Argiletum, where the book shops stood, the atmosphere was almost as strong as it is now in Paternoster Row. The pillars of the shops were covered with announcements of the titles obtainable therein, and of new books shortly to be published. The inside of the book shops resembled more than anything the modern cloth warehouse, since at this time books consisted in form of rolls of papyrus or parchment written on one side, and were kept in racks with a label hanging from the end of each roll, with title, author and other particulars thereon.

At this time the price of books was remarkably low; often a few pence was enough to purchase a well known classic, the reason for this astonishing cheapness being two-fold. Firstly the author seldom received as great a proportion of the profits as he would now expect—indeed, in earlier Grecian times he scorned payment as an insult to his Muse, and secondly, there was the combination of the now nearly obsolete system of slavery with one of the first applications of the principles of mass production to industry. The publisher of those days had his trained staff of readers and transcribers, who of course were slaves,

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\* An Address read before the Rotary Club, Huddersfield, August 29th, 1927.

and when he was going to press, one of his readers would dictate the manuscript to twenty or thirty transcribers. These could each complete a copy of a book of some three hundred lines in about an hour. At this time it has been estimated that the average size of the edition of a book was about five hundred or a thousand copies. There is a fine simplicity about this method of book production which must fill the breasts of our present-day publishers with envy. It was possible by this method to cope immediately with any sudden increase in demand and no book need ever be announced as out of print. Even so there was a good deal of over production, judging from the writings of Martial and others, containing references to what we should now call the Remainder Market. Instead of the unwanted literature being engulfed in pulping machines, however, it was sent to the fish dealers who used it for wrapping up their wares.

We all have fresh in our minds the case of a book called the *Whispering Gallery* being withdrawn from publication, and it may not therefore be out of place to mention that as far back as the 1st century B.C., the Emperor Augustus exercised a spasmodic censorship of books, and one of his successors, Domitian, carried his authority so far as to put to death an author on account of certain passages to which he took exception, and he also crucified all the transcribers of the work.

With regard to copyright it was very easy in those days for unscrupulous people to issue another man's work in their own name, owing to the almost incredible powers of memory which men could attain at that period. It was the custom to hold public recitations of new works shortly before or at the time of publication, and it was no uncommon thing for a man to memorise the whole book at one hearing, rush off to a publisher and get the work into print with his own name as author. Owing to this possibility of having the market spoiled we find the publishers, at the beginning of the 2nd century, forming an Association for the protection of their mutual interests in literary property, each member giving an undertaking not to interfere with the copy of any other member. It is interesting also to note that there were twenty or thirty Public Libraries in Rome at this time, and like the public recitations, these institutions were free to everybody.

With the fall of the Roman Empire, we lose for a time all record of the book-selling trade as such, and for the next few centuries, at any rate in England, authors themselves wrote out and published their own books, as in the more distant ages of antiquity. These of course were often borrowed and copied by the monks, who sold the copies and kept announcements of their stock in the monastery windows.

The interest in literature in England, revived by Alfred the Great, received a new impetus with the invention of paper, the growth of the mediæval University, and the increasing demand for books of a devotional character. A new class of book-seller sprang up, called *stationarii*,

so called to distinguish resident booksellers with stalls or shops, from itinerant pedlars. The former sold also parchment, paper, and writing materials and carried out the kindred occupations of book-binding and book decoration, forming a class from which in time sprang the Worshipful Company of Stationers. This famous Company has since, in greater or lesser degree, dominated the book and paper trade, and still flourishes under its Royal Charter.

I have said that the profits of the book trade to-day are small. It would seem that at no time has book-selling been a very lucrative occupation, as in 1411, the Senate of Oxford University enacted that every one on graduation should give some clothing to the stationers of the town, to provide them with a fairly steady source of income.

With the invention of printing and the establishment in London, in 1476, of Caxton's first English press, the book trade entered upon an entirely new era, which becomes extremely interesting, but so complicated, that I would refer any of you who are desirous of further information to some of the very able books which cover the subject.\*

In passing I should just like to mention how we get our word "book." One of the changes brought about by the invention of printing was the use of pasteboards for the outside of volumes, made up of several sheets of paper stuck together, and re-placing the old solid wooden one which gave such a fearful and wonderful appearance to the old tomes. These wooden boards were usually made of beech wood, and it is from the German word "buche" meaning beech tree, that we get our word "book."

While the centre of the English book trade remained in London, most London booksellers either travelled themselves, or employed men to do so. The most important markets were the great fairs, Stourbridge being the chief.

The importance of Stourbridge to booksellers lasted from the 13th to the 18th century, when it still had its Booksellers Row. The leading English booksellers also made a point of attending the great Frankfurt Fair twice a year. Here the new books of the world could be seen. The importance of this Fair was gradually superseded by that of Leipzig, which to this day maintains its supremacy on the Continent.

The interest to be derived from the study of the book trade from the 16th century onwards is very greatly enhanced by the ups and downs of the religious movements in England. Since, in obedience to the laws of supply and demand, nearly every book published was of a religious nature, no author was immune from the shadow of the stocks or the martyr's stake.

Let us now turn to my own side of the bookselling business, as we find it in England to-day. During the past forty or fifty years

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\* Frank Mumby: *Romance of Book-selling*. Curwen: *History of Booksellers*.



there has sprung up a new fashion in acquisitiveness in books. In earlier days the unwieldy commentaries of the Fathers and Divines held sway over the book collector's fancy. In the early 19th century it was the day of classical Latin and Greek, and other scholarly volumes. But now the field is held by a new cult which has more or less revolutionised the antiquarian book trade, and brought into being such peculiar organisations as the First Edition Club, and other book producing societies.

These, by publishing de luxe editions strictly limited in number and often signed by the author, aim at creating a fictitious and artificial rarity which appeals to a certain type of mentality. The first Edition craze in all probability started quite logically with the books of esteemed authors containing illustrations by some first class artist such as Cruikshank, Rowlandson, Phiz and Leech. The plates for these illustrations would be cut or etched by the artist himself and would be fresh, thus giving good impressions. As the impressions became poor with the wear of the original plate, new ones, if made at all, would probably be copies by some other than the original artist, and the books therefore were of less value intrinsically and from the point of view of association with the artist. Few authors reach fame at once, and in their struggling days most of their works find their way into the obscurity of the Sale Room or the dust heap, creating a scarcity when later their name has become famous. To quote an exception, Sir Walter Scott so quickly became popular that first editions of his works command no very great sum in the market nowadays, because they are comparatively easy to obtain.

In choosing authors whose first editions we may wish to collect, it is necessary to bear in mind that there are many who will increase in popularity and whose first editions will improve in value. Apart from such famous names as Barrie, Conrad, Chesterton, Galsworthy, Masfield, Kipling, Hardy and Shaw, all of whose works command high values if in good condition, there are many writers of lesser fame to whom it would be worth while devoting attention, such as Sheila Kaye-Smith, H. M. Tomlinson, F. Brett Young, James Stephens, Shane Leslie, Sean O'Casey, W. MacFee, Aldous Huxley and Arthur Machen. Be warned, however, that it is not only necessary to ensure a book being a first edition but a first issue of a first edition. If anyone has a Galsworthy's "Captures," which they prize as being a first edition, they should look to see whether it contains an end paper giving a list of books by other authors. As there are only two dozen of the latter in existence, the value is four times as great as that of the second issue, from which Galsworthy had had the offending end paper removed. Another case of first and second issues is Conrad's "Chance," a few copies of which bear on the title page the date 1913 instead of 1914, these scarcities being worth about £25 to-day.

*(To be continued).*

## THE DIVISIONS.

### MIDLAND DIVISION.

The Annual Meeting of the Division was held at the Reference Library, Birmingham, on September 14th, 1927, Mr. C. Lindsay (Chairman of the Division) presiding.

Following the confirmation of the Minutes of the previous meeting, the Chairman read a letter from the President of the Association (Mr. G. F. Vale) wishing the Division success in the coming session.

The Annual Report of the Divisional Committee for 1926-7 was presented by the Secretary, and adopted on the motion of Mr. Lindsay, seconded by Mr. Sargeant. Miss Baker (Hon. Treasurer) presented the financial statement for 1926-7, and this was adopted on the motion of Mr. Jackson, seconded by Mr. Chubb, both speakers paying tribute to the excellent work of the Treasurer in her management of the Division's finances.

The result of the ballot for Officers and Committee was announced as follows:—

*Chairman*: Mr. H. M. Cashmore.

*Hon. Secretary*: Mr. V. Woods.

*Hon. Treasurer*: Miss M. Baker.

*Hon. Auditor*: Mr. C. Jackson.

*Assistant Secretary*: Miss E. M. Bradshaw.

*Divisional Committee*: Miss M. Atherton, Miss E. Weston, and Messrs. Chubb, Patrick, Sargeant, Woodbine.

Mr. Cashmore then took the Chair and thanked the members for his election. Mr. Cashmore also moved a vote of thanks to the officers and committee for 1926-7; this was seconded by Mr. Patrick and carried unanimously.

On the motion of Mr. Cashmore, seconded by Mr. Patrick, it was decided to invite the Council to hold the 1928 Annual Meeting of the Association in Birmingham.

A recommendation of the Committee to establish a Magazine Club for circulating professional and bibliographical periodicals amongst members of the Division, led to a long discussion, and eventually it was decided to establish a Club from October 1st.

A draft programme of meetings for the 1927-8 session was presented by the Secretary, and received the approval of the Meeting.

At the conclusion of the business meeting, the following short papers were read on "Modern Poetry":

"Rupert Brooke," by Miss A. Goodwin.

"W. H. Davies," by Mr. J. Davis.

"Humbert Wolfe," by Miss J. Paterson.

"Alfred Noyes," by Miss H. Woodroffe.

"A General Survey," by Miss P. M. Vernon.

These papers were arranged by Miss P. Vernon and a vote of thanks to her and the readers of the papers, concluded a very successful, interesting, and happy meeting.

V. W.

### Annual Report, 1926-7.

The Committee have pleasure in submitting the following report for the year ending September 30th, 1927.

*Membership*.—The membership of the Division is now 134 compared with 125 last year; an increase of 9.

*Meetings*.—The Annual Meeting was held in Birmingham on September 22nd, 1926, when the following officers were elected:

*Chairman*: Mr. C. Lindsay.

*Hon. Secretary* : Mr. V. Woods.

*Hon. Treasurer* : Miss M. G. Baker.

*Hon. Auditor* : Mr. C. Jackson.

*Assist. Hon. Secretary* : Miss E. M. Bradshaw.

*Divisional Committee* : Miss M. Atherton, Messrs. H. M. Cashmore, L. Chubb, F. J. Patrick, H. Sargeant, H. Woodbine.

Miss E. Weston and Mr. G. L. Burton were co-opted to the Committee in September, 1926.

Ordinary meetings have been held as follows :

October 13th, 1926, at Kidderminster. In the afternoon visits were paid to local Carpet factories. Tea was taken at the invitation of Mr. Councillor Grosvenor, and at the evening meeting Mr. L. Chubb read a paper on "The Trend of Public Library policy."

November 10th, 1926, at Birmingham. Papers on "The Summer School of Library Service," were read by the Misses E. M. Bradshaw, E. C. Clegg, and M. Sheffield.

December 15th, 1926, at Birmingham. The following papers, arranged by Mr. G. L. Burton, were read on "The Drama of to-day." Bernard Shaw, by Mr. C. H. Bird ; John Galsworthy, by Mr. T. Kemp ; The Film drama, by Miss C. Jerwood ; Sir James Barrie, by Miss P. Vernon ; A General Survey, by Mr. G. L. Burton.

January 20th, 1927, at Birmingham. Mr. C. Lindsay delivered his presidential address : "The Lending Library."

February 9th, 1927, at Walsall. In the afternoon visits were paid to a local leather factory and a lithographic works. Tea was taken at the Dora Cafe, by invitation of Mr. Councillor Evans, and at the evening meeting Mr. F. S. Price read a paper "The Child and the Library."

March 10th, 1927, at Birmingham. The fourth Magazine Evening ; brief articles were contributed by ten members.

April 7th, 1927. A joint meeting with the North Midland Library Association, at Leicester. A paper "The Stranger within our midst—Conrad," was read by Mr. G. L. Burton, and a discussion on the "Numbering of Lending Library Books," was opened by Dr. Lowe (Leicester). At the conclusion of the meeting members were entertained at tea by the Mayor of Leicester.

May 10th, 1927, at Worcester. During the afternoon members visited the Royal Porcelain Works and the Cathedral. At the evening meeting Mr. W. S. Lane (Chairman, Worcester County Library) delivered an address on the work of the Worcester County Library System.

Detailed reports of these meetings have appeared in the "ASSISTANT."

It is with pleasure that the Committee acknowledges the services of the members who have read papers at these meetings, and the practical interest of the Librarians of Kidderminster, Walsall, Leicester and Worcester, who have made arrangements for meetings in those towns. Again the Committee has to acknowledge its indebtedness to Walter Powell, Esq. (Chief Librarian) for granting the use of a room at the Reference Library for the Meetings held in Birmingham.

*Educational Activities.*—In former years classes in preparation for the Library Association Examinations have been arranged by the Division. This year saw the commencement of the National Educational Scheme of the Association, and 37 students from the Division were enrolled under the Scheme. Tutors from the Division were Messrs. Chubb, Kemp, and Woodbine. Proof of the success of the Scheme, and of the excellent work of the Conductors, is found in the Examination results, and the Committee desires to express its gratitude to all concerned. During the year 48 members of the Division were successful candidates in the Library Association Examinations.

*Social Activities.*—To promote the social activities of the Division a Social Committee consisting of the Misses Baker, Hardy, Paterson and Weston, and

Messrs. Burton, Hunt, Lindsay and Woods, was appointed in September. Miss E. Weston has acted as Secretary to this Committee, and it is due to her energy and enthusiasm that the social events arranged during the year have been so successful, and have not involved any charge on the funds of the Division. The following events took place during the year :

January 6th, 1927. Christmas Party at the Shakespeare Rooms, Birmingham.

February 3rd, 1927. Dance at Vestry Hall, Birmingham.

July 20th, 1927. Summer Outing at Sutton Park.

*Rambles.*—There have been twelve good rambles since the last Annual Meeting, several of them by old favourite ways, and five over new country. They were fairly well attended, and the weather was not bad ; several times it was surprisingly fine. Girls were in the majority on nearly every occasion. The Whitsun Midnight Ramble over Bredon Hill was perhaps the outstanding event of the year, and one of the best all-night walks yet done.

*Finance.*—For the first time since 1922-3, the Committee are able to announce a substantial balance to the credit of the Division. This satisfactory state of affairs is partly due to the Special Fund opened in 1926 to clear off the debit balance on the accounts of the Division ; the amount subscribed to this was £4 0s. 6d., and the Committee are grateful to all who contributed to the removal of a severe handicap on the Division's work. Special thanks are due, and rendered, to the Hon. Treasurer (Miss M. G. Baker) for her capable management of the Division's finances during three very difficult years.

*Conclusion.*—The Committee are of opinion that the foregoing records a successful year's work and is a testimony to the healthy condition of the Division, which there is every reason to believe will be maintained. In the last report the Committee commented on the desirability of increasing the attendance at the monthly meetings of the Division. Whilst there has been a slight improvement during the present year, the average attendance is still very small, and the Committee hope that every member will make an effort to attend as many meetings as possible during the coming year.

Although the membership shows a slight increase over that of last year, the Division has not yet attained anything approaching the membership it should have, and the Committee appeals to all members to take advantage of every opportunity for bringing in new members.

On behalf of the Committee,

C. LINDSAY, *Chairman.*

VICTOR WOODS, *Hon. Secretary.*

#### *Balance Sheet, 1926-7.*

| <i>Receipts.</i>          |     |       | <i>Expenditure.</i>    |     |       |
|---------------------------|-----|-------|------------------------|-----|-------|
|                           | £   | s. d. |                        | £   | s. d. |
| By subscriptions ...      | 45  | 13 0  | Quotas to London ...   | 29  | 3 3   |
| Special Fund ...          | 4   | 0 6   | Debit Balance (1925-6) | 0   | 13 9½ |
| Balance on Social account | 0   | 3 9½  | Printing ...           | 5   | 10 0  |
|                           |     |       | Hon. Secretary's Ex-   |     |       |
|                           |     |       | penses ...             | 2   | 8 3   |
|                           |     |       | Social Secretary's Ex- |     |       |
|                           |     |       | penses ...             | 0   | 15 3  |
|                           |     |       | Hon. Treasurer's Ex-   |     |       |
|                           |     |       | penses ...             | 0   | 17 8  |
|                           |     |       |                        | £39 | 8 2½  |
|                           |     |       | Balance ...            | 10  | 9 1   |
|                           |     |       |                        | £49 | 17 3½ |
|                           | £49 | 17 3½ |                        |     |       |

*Social Account, 1926-7.*

| <i>Receipts.</i>                   |            |              | <i>Expenditure.</i>                |            |              |
|------------------------------------|------------|--------------|------------------------------------|------------|--------------|
|                                    | £          | s. d.        |                                    | £          | s. d.        |
| <i>Christmas Party, January</i>    |            |              | <i>Christmas Party, January</i>    |            |              |
| 5th, 1927 :                        |            |              | 5th, 1927 :                        |            |              |
| By sale of tickets ...             | 6          | 14 10½       | Expenditure ...                    | 6          | 9 8          |
|                                    |            |              | Balance ...                        | 0          | 5 2½         |
| <i>Dance, February 3rd, 1927 :</i> |            |              | <i>Dance, February 3rd, 1927 :</i> |            |              |
| By sale of tickets ...             | 8          | 2 0          | Expenditure ...                    | 8          | 3 5          |
| Deficit ...                        | 0          | 1 5          |                                    |            |              |
|                                    | <b>£14</b> | <b>18 3½</b> |                                    | <b>£14</b> | <b>13 3½</b> |
| Total Balance ...                  | <b>£0</b>  | <b>3 9½</b>  |                                    |            |              |

14th September, 1927.

Audited and found correct,  
(Signed) C. JACKSON.

## THE NORTH EAST DIVISION.

The next meeting of the Division will take place at Gateshead, on Wednesday, November 9th, 1927.

*Programme.*

- 4.30 p.m. Assemble at Hawk's Café, Low Fell. Members will be received by the Chairman and Mrs. Rennie.
- 5.0 p.m. Tea, by the kind invitation of Mr. and Mrs. Rennie.
- 6.15 p.m. Committee Meeting.
- 6.45 p.m. General Meeting. Mr. Briggs, one of the Official Delegates of the A.A.L., will give a resumé of the Library Association Conference held at Edinburgh.
- "A Night with Schubert." Mr. Rennie will lecture on Schubert, and friends will render vocal and instrumental selections.
- 9.0 - 10.30 p.m. Dancing and Refreshments.

## RECOMMENDED BOOKS.

*(Books that should not be missed.)*

Bergmann, Carl. The history of Reparations. (Benn, 21s.)

Dr. Bergmann has had continuous and intimate contact with the problem of reparations. A full review of the book appears in the *T. L. S.*

Blom, Eric. A general index to modern musical literature in the English language. (Curwen, 5s.)

In addition to material in book form, this index covers articles in the more important musical periodicals during the period 1915-26.

Ernle, Rowland Edmund Prothero, 1st Baron. The light reading of our ancestors : chapters in the growth of the English novel. (Hutchinson, 15s.)

"Lovers of the art of writing will treasure a work that, apart from the scholarly content, is remarkable for its pithy and lucid summaries, its ordered harmonies of thought and language."—C. A. NICHOLSON in *The Bookman*.

Etherege, Sir George. Dramatic works. Edited by H. F. B. Brett-Smith. 2 v. (Blackwell, 15s.)

The only modern edition of *Etherege* is the almost unobtainable one of Verity (1888). The long awaited Percy Reprint may therefore be assured of a good reception. So far, two volumes have been issued, containing the plays, textual criticism and a bibliography. The third volume, available only to subscribers, will include the poems, the letters, and selections from the early critical writings.

Blake, Ernest G. *Enemies of timber*. (Chapman & Hall, 12s. 6d.)  
Girdwood, John. *Worms in furniture and structural timber*. (Milford, 12s. 6d.)

Forewarned is forearmed. Look to your card cabinets. These books deal with the common furniture beetle and its close kinsman, the Death Watch beetle, and suggest methods for their elimination and extermination. The treatment is equally applicable, apparently, to a cathedral roof as to a chair leg.

Graves, Robert. *Poems, 1914-1926*. (Heinemann, 7s. 6d.)

"... Here is an extraordinarily fine collection of poems, with beauty enough even for the cavillers; a beauty that no one who cares for English poetry will want to miss."—C. H. WARREN in *The Bookman*.

Mackenzie, W. Mackay. *The mediaeval castle in Scotland*. (Methuen, 15s.)

Murry, J. Middleton, (ed.). *The journal of Katherine Mansfield*. (Constable, 7s. 6d.)

During a life of continual physical suffering, and recurrent mental anguish occasioned by the difficulty which she experienced in writing, K. M. strove ever towards "an inward conviction that some work of inward purification had to be accomplished before... she would be worthy to express the complete truth which in her imagination she apprehended." *The Journal* is, in part, the record of her struggle. "And this all sounds very strenuous and serious. But now that I have wrestled with it, it's no longer so. I feel happy—deep down. *All is well*." Let us believe, from these last words, written three months before her death, that she achieved her quest.

Pulver, Jeffrey. *A biographical dictionary of old English music*. (Kegan Paul, 25s.)

Although in dictionary form, Mr. Pulver's book makes delightful reading. It deals with the period between the famous Reading rota "*Sum-er is icumen in*," (c. 1226), and the death of Henry Purcell II. in 1695.

Richmond, Leonard and Littlejohns, John. *The technique of water-colour painting*. (Pitman, 21s.)

Seebohm, M. E. *The evolution of the English farm*. (Allen & Unwin, 16s.)

"Miss Seebohm's book is written for 'those who love a farmyard.' Its object is to show the gradual growth of the English farm, from its humble beginnings in the Stone Age, to the fully equipped homesteads of to-day."—*New Statesman*. Includes an excellent bibliography.

The outstanding "book of the month" is, undoubtedly, *The Letters of Gertrude Bell*. Doughty, Lawrence,—now Miss Bell. What is the secret of Arabia, that it should inspire such books?

G. ERIC HASLAM.

## SHORT NOTICES

*Of Reports, Catalogues, Pamphlets, etc., received.*

Sheffield Public Libraries. Books for the listener : special list. No. 6 ; and 10th Annual Report, 1926-7.

The question of Co-operation with the B.B.C. has been raised during the past few months and here is one of its results. The idea is altogether admirable, and should prove of the greatest value both to the library and the listener. The list is divided into sections, each of which is headed by the particulars relating to the lecturer, times, dates, etc., already announced in advance by the B.B.C. in their circulars to libraries. The Report contains an illustration of the reconstructed Branch at Attercliffe.

Leeds Public Libraries : Lectures worth hearing and Books worth reading. (20 pp.) ; and Annual Report, 1926-7.

An excellent linking-up of a series of lectures with the books available for borrowers on the same and allied subjects.

Grand Rapids Public Library : Bulletin.

Brentford and Chiswick Public Libraries and Museums ; Annual Reports, 1926-7.

Praha : Bibliographický Katalog, 1926 : Index.

University of London : School of Librarianship Syllabus, 1927-8.

British Library of Political and Economic Science : Bulletin, August, 1927.

This valuable list contains a record of duplicates available for exchange, among which we notice Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*, 2 vols., 1835. This work is now out of print and fetches 15s. in the secondhand book market—it is well worth having. One of Mr. Headicar's most valuable characteristics is evidently a genuine desire for real co-operation. "Co-operation is in the air," he said recently at Cambridge, "let us do what we can to bring it down to earth."

Coventry Public Libraries : Readers' Bulletin, September-October, 1927.

Brussels : Union des Associations Internationales :

Records the Resolutions passed at the last Conference held at Brussels.

Portsmouth : 43rd Annual Report, 1926-7.

F. W. Faxon Company's Bulletin of Bibliography and Dramatic Index, May-August, 1927.

Preston Public Libraries : Catalogue of Books on the Fine Arts. (pp. 87).

It will surprise most people to learn that Preston Public Library has one of the finest collections of books on the fine arts in any public library in England. The catalogue recently compiled by the Librarian, Mr. Frank Helliwell, is a splendid piece of work. We are glad to see that acknowledgement is made to Mr. T. Cooper who assisted in the arduous work of compilation, and classification by Dewey. The library is particularly rich in old and comparatively unobtainable books on painting and the allied arts. We notice, for instance, the fine two-volume edition (1880) of Gilchrist's "Blake," and are frankly envious. Most of us have to put up with the reprint. Burton's beautiful book on porcelain and most of the extra numbers of the "Studio" are also catalogued.

We must confess, however, that we almost wept to find that this splendid collection is unaccountably spoilt by several bad gaps in the selection of modern art books. To mention only a few at random, we can find not a single work of either Roger Fry or Clive Bell in the catalogue ! It seems extraordinary that the valuable works of unquestionably the two greatest art critics writing English, should find no place in such a collection. Fry's *Vision and Design* is the most valuable book on aesthetics and art that any library can offer its public.

Then again, surely the Blake section should include Swinburne's, Burdett's, Chesterton's and Wicksteed's books, for they are all standard.



We can find no mention of Tolstoy's *What is Art?*; nothing on Renoir, Degas, Manet, or Monet, and worst of all, nothing on Cézanne. Vollard's inexpensive works on Cézanne and Renoir are classics already, and no library should be without them. Except for Lewis Hind's popular account, the post-impressionists, so far as this catalogue is concerned, might never have existed.

Fulham Public Libraries. Reader's Guide, October-December, 1927.

A useful list of additions, containing also a special list of books on Painting and the other Graphic arts, compiled by Miss G. Rees, F.L.A. Tyneside Paper, No. 9: Libraries on Tyneside.

A most excellent pamphlet forming a short regional survey of library provision in the specified area. The Paper is issued by the Bureau of Social Research, 18, Ellison Place, Newcastle-on-Tyne (price 2d.). Too much praise cannot be given to the persons responsible for such work as this. It is one of the most heartening signs of the times to find spontaneous efforts being made by outside bodies to co-operate with library authorities.

Library Journal, September, 1927.

Contains illustrations and plans of a successful Branch Library at Watertown (Mass.) Notice is given that the New York Public Library have several copies of J. S. Bullock's "Psychological aspects of the liquor problem" (2 vols. 1903), to give away. Any library willing to pay postal charges may have a copy.

Grand Rapids Public Library: 50th Annual Report. 1927.

Ipswich Library Journal, October, 1927.

The extension work in operation at Ipswich recorded herein reveals the truly amazing development of this East-Anglian system of libraries. A few years ago, and Ipswich, so far as its libraries were concerned, was almost unknown. Now the fame of the gramophone recitals, musical lectures, celebrity concerts, etc., has spread even to London. Whilst we are at a loss to express our admiration for the energy and enterprise of those responsible for this change, we are tempted to ask—where does the library come in? If the library does not suffer from these activities there is nothing but praise for them; but in so many cases they seem to become more important than the books themselves.

The Book Week in Ipswich will be opened by Sir E. Benn, and Messrs. G. A. Stephen, W. C. Berwick Sayers, and Pett Ridge, will contribute addresses. We must heartily congratulate the Librarian of Ipswich on this side of his extension activities—the labour of organization must have been great, but we feel sure the benefit both to the library and the public will be incalculable.

Cheltenham Quarterly: September, 1927.

The Book Window: a guide to book buying and book reading. (October, 1927. Price 3d. W. H. Smith and Son).

We fancy most library workers would be glad to see this magazine and would welcome it as an addition to "mess-room" literature. An odd half-hour or so spent in its company would keep assistants in touch with most of the important happenings in the book world. This number contains a special interview with Mr. John Galsworthy and a most useful account of German "best-sellers," together with a further instalment of a popular history of English literature. We notice Sir Frederic Kenyon has given *The Book Window* his blessing and imagine that most people who wish to see books reduced to half their present price will do so too. The more people we can get to buy good books the cheaper they will become.

Reading at Croydon: an account of a year, 1926-7.

The amount of publicity which this extremely able report has received from the daily press is a pleasant indication of its general interest. As a record of active librarianship it compares very favourably with anything

we have seen from either American or other English systems. Reference is made to the preparation by the Reference Library Staff of reading lists for borrowers who have asked for assistance in their reading. This seems to be a very valuable activity and one which is well worthy of imitation. Public service at Croydon is evidently interpreted in its widest sense. It has been made to include such doubtful items as the issuing (and sale of) "Wireless Strike News Bulletins." This is surely going too far. To the present writer, the most surprising thing in the whole of the Report is the paragraph in which it is stated that the juvenile borrowers "give assistance in all the mechanical processes connected with their libraries. They serve at the counter, keep the room in order," etc., etc., ———.

F. S. SMITH.

### CORRESPONDENCE.

To the Hon. Editor, LIBRARY ASSISTANT.

PUBLIC LIBRARY,

77, HIGH STREET, WHITECHAPEL, E.1.

October 7th, 1927.

DEAR SIR,

I was greatly surprised to see in your last issue a notice that the next meeting would not be held until November 23rd, this seems to be a long time to have to wait for a meeting, also it is to be deplored that on that same day at the School of Librarianship, G. Douie, Esq., who acted as Secretary to the Royal Commission, is to give a public address on the Departmental Report.

Surely our meetings could be arranged so that they do not clash with rival meetings of this kind.

I would now like to congratulate the Committee who were responsible for the last meeting, it was, in my humble opinion, the acme of success.

I would like to call attention to a book by the City Surveyor, Mr. Perks, entitled "Essays on Old London," and published by the Cambridge University Press, at 12s. 6d. This book will enable all of us who seized the opportunity of visiting the Guildhall, to visualise the history and architecture of this venerable pile.

I hope I have not claimed too much space, but I think a little more consideration to dates would ensure a larger attendance at our meetings.

Yours, etc.,

HENRY G. GRAY.

[In this instance, as the meeting referred to is in co-operation with the L.A., the Education Committee was unable to avoid the unfortunate clash of dates.—  
HON. EDITOR.]

### NEW MEMBERS.

*Fellow.*—Mr. B. J. Frost (East Ham).

*Members.*—George E. Beach (East Ham), John F. Bromley (Guildhall), Nanette L. Caldwell (Deptford), Edith M. Crompton (Chiswick), Miss G. A. Hill, Miss E. M. L. Mundy, Miss N. E. Wells (Bath), Miss C. Keogh (Irish C.L.S.), Gweneth Susan Smith (C.L.S.), James E. Ames, Harry Wm. Berer, Lilian L. Giles, Beryl M. Thompson, Doris Woodall (East Ham), John B. Purdie (Willesden).

*Associates.*—Miss A. Crawford (West Ham), Miss D. Perkins (West Ham), Miss M. Wilson (Islington).

MIDLAND DIVISION. *Members.*—Miss M. S. Taylor, B.A., Miss E. M. Stokes (Coventry); Miss F. M. Ward (Bourneville Works Library). *Associates.*—Miss Dunn (Birmingham); Miss C. Roscoe, Miss E. Sherwood, Miss J. Hayward, Miss E. E. Evans (Coventry).

SOUTH WESTERN DIVISION. *Member.*—Margery Neve (Bournemouth). *Associates.*—Gilbert Oliver Turner, Thomas Charles Boulter (Bournemouth); Elsie Payne (Portsmouth).